## UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

#### SHIFTING GEARS PROJECT BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY

**INFORMANT: TIM MCNAMARA** 

INTERVIEWER: EVELYN MCNAMARA

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T = TIME = EVELYN

#### SG-BV-T128

## [Tape begins with Mr. McNamara speaking about finding employment.]

T: find a job, can remember there weren't too many jobs available. But, uh, so that uh, I'd say 90% of the boys and girls after they got out of grammar school, they go through high school.

E: So what do you remember about working in the rubber shop? Do you remember the people that you worked? And who were some of the people?

- T: The people, Well, the machine, the man that ran the machine, that I used to work for, his name was Jimmy Haggerty. [unclear] And uh, then for a year, I worked in the [unclear] I was running the elevator. It was one of those hand elevators. Had to pull the rope and all.
- E: Oh, How many floors were there?
- T: About three or four.
- E: So this would be like a freight elevator, bringing materials. Must have been heavy, pulling on those ropes, hard work.
- T: Yeah, that was to bring material from one floor to another. They had little hand trucks. And they would wheel that truck onto the elevator. And then get on themselves and I would bring them up or down, whichever way they were going.
- E: So you worked in both places, the Rubber company and the Falk Mill. Do you remember what they looked like? What did the Rubber Company look like when you were there? Was it very dingy, dreary? Was it bright, airy?

T: No, it was, they kept it fairly clean. Because they were busy all the time keeping the floors clean. Because they had to take good care of the machines, keep them oiled and operating properly. And it wasn't too noisy, like some of the woolen mills, that some of the people worked in, like a lot of French people. People came down from Canada and worked in the Woonsocket Woolen Mills, and they were very noisy, those machines. But in the Rubber Shop, we didn't have too many machines we could call noisy.

E: So it was a fairly clean place to work also. ?

T: It was, yeah. And there seemed to be plenty of room. Never seem to be crowded.

E: What about the felt Mill? Was there a lot of dust if they were making felt, with the felt liners?

T: In certain rooms, there would be, yeah.

E: And how much pay would you get? Do you remember what your pay would be? When you worked in the Rubber company as a boy, as a runner?

T: Yeah, I think it was about \$6.00 a week.

E: How many hours?

T: I think it was 7-5 pm in the afternoon.

E: Would you have an hour for lunch?

T: Yes, and hour for lunch.

E: Would you work on Saturday also or just five days a week?

T: Saturday also.

E: So that would be six days 7-5 pm, was the pay any better in the felt company?

T: About the same.

E: Do you remember why you switched from the rubber company to the felt mill?

T: Well, I think, one reason was my grandfather worked in the felt mill and he had kind of a foreman's job, and I thought after running the elevator for a while, I thought I ought to get promoted to some kind of a little better job. But then, I had the chance to go to Bridgeport, so I forgot about it.

E: So in a way, it was good you went to Bridgeport, because you were able to play in a team were there were scouts for college.

T: Well, that was an important part of my life. To get to Bridgeport. Without playing ball, it would take a long while before anybody could classify me as a possible big leaguer if they saw me play in Millville. And there would be more organized baseball in Bridgeport, cause its the largest city, there be more teams, and there would be more what you would call scouts. Scouts would be sent out by big league teams, to see if there was anybody possible for a tryout. And you would hardly ever see that in Millville. Or any small town. But there weren't too many around in those days. I remember, when I was in high school, I was asleep with my father who was living and my father, his salary, in the Rubber Shop, made \$10.50, and what I remember about that, pretty vivid in my memory, every Monday morning, my father would get up early of course to go to work early. And I was up, maybe 8:00 to go to high school, every Monday morning he'd leave a dime on the buffet, that would be my spending money for the week. That would be my spending money for the week. Ten cents! [laughs]

E: Now, when you had to go to Blackstone, to high school, and you had to take the trolley, did you have to pay your fare when you went to school?

T: No you had to buy tickets.

E: Oh they had a special rate on the trolley to go to high school, do you remember what it was, say for the week?

T: I don't remember exactly. I think they might have gotten like 100 tickets to start with, for something like maybe a dollar.

E: So that would almost take you through a couple of months, but even that, when you think of \$1.00 out of \$10.50, that was a major expenditure.

T: Yeah, but all the families were just about the same.

E: I don't think we quite had finished when you were back in grammar school, you were saying that you had skipped first grade and went right into second grade. Do remember what the schoolroom was like, what the desks were like, what kind of paper or pencils you used when you first started using ink?. You know, what the school looked like physically?

T: What does it look like now, in the Longfellow School?

E: They have done a lot of renovations.

T: Modern Desks and so forth?

E: Yes, Desks that can be moved, were your desks nailed to the floor?

T: Oh yes, bolted to the floor.

E: Bolted. And um, now did you use slates, or was there plenty of paper and pencil to use?

- T: Paper and pencil and the board.
- E: The blackboard.
- E: Did you have workbooks to write in or just your textbooks to write in?
- T: For homework, the teacher would give us an outline of maybe a half a dozen things that we had to do. Then of course we had to turn them in every morning.
- E: And was there each room for one grade, were there two grades together in one room? Like, when you were in the second grade was it an entire second grade room or was some second and third together?
- T: in the beginning, I think the first and second grade was together, in the same room, but after that, I think each grade had their own room
- E: About how many children were in a class? When I looked at that graduation picture, there looked about to be thirty children.
- T: All the way up to grade school, there be about thirty.
- E: So you were in Longfellow School the regular building that is there for every grade from first to eighth grade.
- T: The eighth was in the top floor ah the main building.
- E: Now you say the main building, Where there two buildings there for the Longfellow School?
- T: No, but distinguished when my father worked in the small building where he took care of the cement. That was a separate building. But ah, the school itself was large enough to accommodate every single grade needed.
- E: 'Cause I know at sometimes, I know John tells me, he went to Bannigan City, for a few grades and the portable school and they had the school room up at Chestnut Hill, that's why I wondered. But when you went, you went to Longfellow for all eight grades, and they were all in the same building.
- T: After some point, after I left there, at some point, there were the [unclear] city school the Bannigan City Schools. That was across from the other side of town. I think they had maybe, first or second grades there. Um, trying to remember what the reason for that was. 'Course originally supposed to take care of the children from that locality. But like John, I don't know why we would go over there.
- E: Now how about things in the schoolroom physically, Um, was there a well with running water in the school and toilets when you went.

- T: Well, we had bathrooms.
- E: You did have bathrooms.
- T: Yeah, and trying to think, I don't think we had a place to wash up.
- E: But there were bathrooms, and electric lights.
- T: Yeah, I think there were electric lights. Yeah, and of course one of the features, probably, once a month, we have the old fashioned spelling bee.
- E: Oh yes, all the grades? How would that work?
- T: When you got all the grades together. [unclear] for each grade.
- E: Um
- T: But we used to look forward to that. That was a lot of fun.
- E: Anything else you remember, particularly, any good experience, any bad experience at school? What is something you remember the most? Or the
- T: Trying to think, we used to have special days, where we would have to get up and recite poems, in front to of a class. The first few times we did it we were embarrassed, getting up in front of everybody.
- E: You had to do this from memory? you had to memorize them?
- T: They'd give you something, some famous historical event, and you'd have to either memorize a poem or tell a story. Like for instance what happened about the Civil War, or [unclear] or you'd give an account of the life of some famous man. Thomas Edison for example, people like that.
- T: Where would you go and look it up if there would be no library?
- E: Woonsocket.
- E: You'd have to go to Woonsocket to do research. So that would be a major undertaking.
- T: Plus, in my case, uh, and many other cases, too, My brother Bill was the oldest in the family, and my particular case, I was the youngest, so if there was any information I wanted to get, about some preparation I was doing, I better ask Bill, or my other brothers, Jimmy, Rog, and Eddie. And my sister Sherry of course. ANd they were generally pretty well posted on different kinds of histories.

- E: They could get material for you from the high school or their own high school books.
- T: Especially my brother Bill, he was almost a reference book himself. He was a great reader.
- E: Because, I think, didn't he become a salesman for a textbook company.
- T: He started off, he got out of here, and [unclear] went to the University of Maine and graduated in 1908. Started off by teaching school, and then he got a job as a superintendent of schools up in Maine. Two small towns together, name of them were Ridenviile and New Portland. And he was Superintendent of those two schools. And then I guess, maybe he thought he'd do better by selling. And I think he taught school and the superintendent for the period of maybe three years. Then he got into the selling business, and worked for a book company, going around to the different schools. So he was better suited for that, because he was an excellent salesman.

E: So, you do better financially.

T: Oh yeah

E: Now you had said, you had never thought of going to college, because your father, didn't have the money, but, yet Bill was older, and he did go to college, how did that happen?

E: He was financed by, there was a priest, in Millville, he was the pastor, Father Pendergast. And he took a fancy to Bill, and another young fellow in the same class, Tommy Sullivan. No relation to Marty's folks. And Fr. Pendergast finally asked the two of them, I forget now where Sullivan went, what college, but Bill went to the University of Maine. he went to University of Maine because he thought he'd like to study engineering. And they had a great engineering plan, ah course up there. But, uh, paid the way for both of them through college.

E: He did that in one year, he must have sent many children to college or just these two boys?

T: The two boys, but there may be others.

E: That perhaps you didn't know about.

T: Oh sure.

E: How long was the Fr. Pendergast, was this called St. Augustine's Church, did it look the same as our old St. Augustine's?

T: Well, the one that burned down.

E: Yes.

T: Yes, Fr. Pendergast was the pastor there for probably twenty, twenty five years.

E: When, did he either die or retire as pastor? Do you remember? Was it shortly after

T: He was transferred, most of them were transferred to different parishes, he was transferred, I forget now, the neighborhood of Clinton, MA, but then he died probably, maybe something like five or ten years later.

E: But to think of putting two children from Millville through college, that was

T: But, of course, it wasn't too expensive then.

E: No, do you think he got a scholarship for them? Or maybe had somebody he could contact?

T: Fr. Pendergast paid most of it. Bill used to work part time when he was in college, somewhere around the college, in different jobs. In the summertime, he would work too, and in that way, that helped a little.

E: Helped to pay some of his expenses.

T: But, uh, compared to now, figure at least, at least \$10,000, for a college education. In those days, of course, at that time, a smaller school, The University of Maine, I would guess, the tuition involved at a place like that in those days, would be ah, wouldn't be anymore than a \$1000.00.

E: Which was a lot of money then, if you were earning \$10.00 a week.

T: It was a lot, yes.

E: Now, was he the only other one of your family that went on to college.

T: Yeah

E: And yourself.

T: Yeah, 'Course my sister Agnes, when my mother died, she was about thirteen, in high school, and she took over the housekeeping for the whole family and had to leave school. So she did that until things got a little easier. And some of us hot married and went away, and she did quite a job for a number of years, at thirteen years old.

E: When you think of it, now how old, when Ag was thirteen, uh, some of the boys were older, now who was the oldest? Bill?

T: Bill

E: And how much older than Ag was he?

T: Bill was ah, let's see, he was about maybe five years older than Ag. There was Bill, then

there was Jimmy, then [unclear] then Ag after Jimmy. Then Rog, Jerry, Eddie and me. Then there were, strangely enough, there were, uh, the oldest girl was, they were married in England, my father and mother. And, and ah, the first baby was born in England and died there. And they called her Margaret Ellen, and after I was born there was another born after me, a girl, and they called her Margaret Ellen, and both those girls died in infancy.

E: Isn't that, now you said they were married in England, but yet you said that your mother's uh, mother and father were living here in Millville, so when did they come,

T: After they were married

E: No, so they must have come over afterwards.

T: Afterwards

E: Afterwards, so how long after your mother and father were married did they come from

T: Well, my father, they were married in 1882, and my father came over here and got a job and he saved enough, he came over here alone. he saved up enough money about a year later to send for my mother. Then she came over and then the two of them started up housekeeping in Millville.

E: And when did her parents come over? Did they earn enough money or save enough, then to bring the parents over?

T: Probably about ten years after.

E: Oh, so that would be about 1892. And they brought how many children with them, because the Powers had other children besides your mother?

T: Yeah, they brought Maurice, because my mother was their daughter, Maurice, then Johnny, he's the oldest John.

E: Older than your mother?

T: Yup. My mother might have been the youngest, either she or Maurice. But uh, then they had two boys, James and Eddie who were in the English army, and they were serving time in India, that' when England had [unclear] declaring colonies all over the world. And after they got out of the army, they came over to Ireland, James and Eddie. And they only lived probably then years after they got here, because they had contacted yellow fever, when they were in the army in India. And they never got over it.

E: And that was the wake you mentioned, James' wake, Jimmy's wake.

T: That's right.

- E: What was it your mother died of?
- T: I asked Jerry that. Oh, gee, she probably, tuberculosis. I think it was something to do with the effects of childbirth. Because, she died in 1901, and uh, baby Margaret Ellen died in the same year. So, Jerry seems to think that my mother never got over the effects of childbirth.
- E: Can you describe what the house looked like that you grew up in? The house on Main Street, what it looked like inside or outside.
- T: It was an ordinary house, and the uh, one, two, three, four, five, six rooms, three bedrooms upstairs. Downstairs, kitchen, dining room, parlor, we used to call it. And uh, that was about it.
- E: And what did the kitchen look like? It would be quite different from the kitchen of today.
- T: Do you remember they used to call roller towels?
- E: Oh yes, yes.
- T: Well, we use to, everybody used roller towels. Very unsanitary of course, but that's what they used to use, the roller towels. Instead of cloth towels, it wasn't paper either, it was cloth. And they would last so long and they would have to washed. Ah,
- E: Was there running water in the house, or a pump, how did you get the water?
- T: In the early days, we had a well outside, but then, my father got water inside the house. We had water inside the house.
- E: Like a hand pump that you would pump up and down?
- T: Yeah
- E: What kind of stove did you cook on?
- T: We had a wood stove, and we used to use wood for cooking, my sister Ag. And in the wintertime we used to burn a lot of coal. But it was a regular kitchen stove, and that was supposed to heat the whole house. Upstairs and Down.
- E: From the kitchen stove.
- T: From the kitchen stove, we used to have a, they would cut a hole in the wall, about this size, leading upstairs and they have it really close to the stove, so that some of the heat would go upstairs.
- E: So it would be like an open metal register,
- T: Wouldn't be open, there would be a shield though

E: Yeah but they could open to let the warm air go up. But it mustn't have been cold getting up in the morning in the winter.

T: It certainly was.

E: [Laughs] Wouldn't take you long to go downstairs.

T: I can see my brother Eddie now [unclear], in later years, I used to sleep in the same room with him and he was a great one for fresh air! I remember one time in the winter, I'd wake up and half his bed would be covered with snow [laughs]

E: Really?

T: Yeah, yeah.

E: And would you have much in the way of closets in your bedroom?

T: Not too many closets.

E: How about clothes, would you have many clothes or just a few outfits?.

T: not too many clothes, either. Course we had different clothes for winter. Maybe, maybe one winter outfit which was worn

E: Like a Sunday outfit or a school outfit?

T: Yeah, a Sunday outfit, we had an overcoat. That of course had to last us all winter, maybe two or three winters.

E: Where would you go to get your clothing? Or would your mother make much of your clothing?

T: She used to make it when she was living, that's what Jerry told me. She used to make it when the kids were small, and after that when I grew up, my father would take us to ah, Woonsocket, a clothing store there. To buy a new suit, maybe once every five years! [laughs]

E: Mm, would there be any dressmaker in town?

T: There were dressmakers. But uh, they used to get, there was two dressmakers on Main Street there, and I guess, they used to get quite a bit of work. they were always busy

E: Who were they, do you remember their names?

E: Ah

- E: The name Murphy comes to mind, were they
- T: No
- E: No, not Murphy, no
- T: Ah, I think Sullivan, another Sullivan no relation to Marty's folks. Trying to think of a first name, something like Ellen, Ellen Sullivan. She had a little dress shop there and
- E: And she would make clothes to order if you asked that they be made. Was it very expensive to have it made?
- T: It was. And of course most of the families, had somebody in the family that could sew, so that they wouldn't have to call on the seamstress to do much work, because, like my sister Ag, she was very good with making clothes. Dresses and stuff like that. We used to have the old fashioned sewing machine.
- E: With the treadle that she would pump with her foot.
- T: Yeah, the treadle.
- T: Now, it was never even thought that instead of her giving up school, that one of the older boys would stay, it was always considered the girls' place to.
- T: Yeah
- E: And what would she do in the house, like for cooking, would she have to make all the bread or would you get that from the bakery?
- T: All the cooking, keep the house clean. My father used to help her quite a bit. So Jerry said, after my mother died. Then my father, Jerry said, was very clever about fixing things, so we very seldom had to call anybody in if something went wrong within the house. He could take care of it.
- E: Even though it wasn't his trade, he could build things. How did Ag feel about having to give up her high school?
- T: I don't know. Nobody ever told me. Whether she was disappointed or not, maybe well, I think to begin with, she probably was disappointed, but then after thinking what she was doing and how much she was doing, to help take care of the family, she probably knowing her nature, I think she probably decided that this is what I'm supposed to be doing and I'm going to do it.
- E: Was an education then, as important for a girl as it today?
- T: No, most girls, when they [unclear] got old enough to work, would just get ordinary jobs, like in the Rubber Shop, like Jerry worked in the Rubber Shop before she went to war, and uh,

[unclear] In the summertime, summer vacation, we have a chance to get a spare jobs in the rubber shop, usually the rubber shop, not so much the [unclear] But I worked in the rubber shop on my summer vacation for a couple of years.

E: You mean as you were going to high school, when the people who worked in the Rubber shop would have their regular vacation? they would have children come in and help or just extra help in the summer?

T: Extra help, yeah, ordinary jobs like packing up stuff, that didn't require any skill.

E: Would you put in long hours in the summer then?

T: Not for part time, not when we were going to school.

E: Did you have to turn your money in when you earned it in the summer, to help out the family?

T: Yeah.

E: Could you keep any of it, or would you just turn everything over?

T: Well, if there was any left, ah, you might have an extra dime or quarter.

E: Well, I mean it was just part of helping out, whatever anybody earned went to support.

T: You were expected to do that.

E: Um.

T: I remember when I went down to an apprentice toolmaker with my brother Rog, it was a four year course, and the first year, my pay was \$6.00 a week, and the second year we got a raise up to \$7.50. Third year, you got a raise up to \$9.00. [laughs]

E: And the fourth year?

T: But, I couldn't live on that, but my brother Rog took care of me, my brother Rog

E: Because they felt they were teaching you a trade. All right. What would you get in the fourth year? Were you a full fledged

T: I wasn't there, I went to college.

E: OK, what was he earning as a master tool

T: Toolmakers were well paid in those days. During the war, first world war. His average pay would be, ah, in those days \$ 100.00 a week, which was good.

- E: Wow, so was he able to send some home to help out with your father or he had a family of his own to take care of?
- T: Well, I guess he probably would have, but I don't think he had to. Because we were getting along all right.
- E: That's right, you were the youngest one, so if you were able to, all right, and your father was still alive then, when you were in Bridgeport?
- T: Uh, no. He died the year I graduated from high school, 1914. But before he died, he had talked to Rog, my brother, and that's when he asked Rog, that if sometime he could get me in as an apprentice toolmaker down at Bridgeport.
- E: What did your father die of?
- T: Pernicious Anemia, they called it. He was about 65.
- E: What would that be though, you know, just runned down.
- T: Uh, yeah, it might be, pernicious anemia. Like tuberculosis, they said that uh, Jerry of course told me, and Ag when she was alive, and all of them when they were alive, I used to ask them about it. And they said that he kept losing weight, for the last year. It might have been a form of tuberculosis. A lot of tuberculosis around in those days.
- E: And what would you get TB from? Would that be the water?
- T: Uh, no, in his case, it could have been the fumes of the cement that he was fixing. That might have something to do with his death.
- E: OK, you know, I remember, they used to use what they call a rubber cement, on shoes, was that like a rubber type cement, it wasn't the cement, like the cement sidewalk, I know that. It was like a paste or glue. What were the materials in that cement.
- T: I really don't know, I know I used to watch the machines that he was taking care of, making that cement, I really don't know they
- E: But there was an odor to it.
- T: Oh, a distinct odor.
- E: Could have been an effect that no one realized. IF he worked for something long enough, because he did that all his life.
- T: When we was in Ireland, he was what they call a dyer. He worked in a mill, that made cloth and he was in the dyeing department and he had, he was responsible for the different mixtures

that were put into the cloth to make the different colors.

E: That would have been quite a trade. How come you didn't go into the woolen mills, [unclear]

T: I don't know why he didn't go into that when he got over here. yeah, must ask Jerry, maybe would tell. She's my historian now.

E: That's because there were so many woolen mills in the area, at the time, that almost sounds as though that were a trade unless he didn't care for it.

T: That is strange.

E: There are still other pictures we haven't looked at, we probably should get back and look at some of these pictures, because I still have other questions to ask you. [laughs] Who are these two people?

T: Yeah, that's [unclear]

E: Should I mark in [person's name] under there [on the picture]

T: Sure.

E: Do you remember when that was taken?

T: Yes, about, in the thirties. That was a banquet we had in Danielson, Connecticut, and Casey was the feature speaker. And he was my manager out in Toledo. He was quite a character.

E: Now this particular occasion was in Bridgeport?

T: No, Danielson.

E: Oh, Danielson.

[They both begin to look through the photographs.]

T: He was a great baseball star [holding up a picture]

E: There are so many materials here, that it would take a long time just to

T: Well, if you want to take it home

E: Oh, that would be great, probably something

T: [Unclear] yeah, one of James kids, yeah.

E: Here is a picture of you with Jimmy Fitz.

- T: Oh, yeah Fitzy, yeah.
- E: Now, did you grow up with Jimmy Fitzgerald?
- T: No, he was older than I. He was a great friend of my brother Eddie's, John's father. In the last ten years, he was available and so was I and we used to go on trips together.
- E: But he was born in Millville?
- T: He was born in Millville, yeah.
- E: Many Irish in Millville, were they like friends of different
- T: Yeah, that was one thing about Millville, all the families seem to get along together.
- E: Were they related back in Ireland? Is that how they knew one another?
- T: Some of them, but not too much.
- E: But you really don't know how some of them came. Did the rubber company advertise for people to come? Advertise that they were looking for Irish.
- T: I think how it mostly happened, some of the ones, for one reason or another, would come over here, and after the workshop was built, and they would correspond with their relatives and friends in Ireland, and many encourage them to come out.
- E: But you really don't, no one ever mentioned to you, how it happened, that they came.
- T: I think that's probably how it happened.
- E: Now when you grew up as a child playing, what were some of the things that you would do to amuse yourself? The children have so many different things today, they watch TV, or listen to the radio, or you know as well as play outside. What was it you did for the most part growing up, when you were very young, and then as you got older?
- T: Well, number one, baseball.
- E: Oh, I would imagine.
- T: Because, I remember my sister Ag would take care of the house, and uh, she used to call me in four and five times [laughs], call me in for meals.
- E: So in other words, that would be something boys would play together?
- T: Oh, from the time, we were eight, nine, ten.

- E: Would the girls play also?
- T: No, girls never played baseball in those days. And they could have, because Helen was an excellent ball player. Now, of course they have baseball teams for girls.
- E: But it was just not something that you could even think of doing. I mean, it wasn't that, you said you can't play with us, they just had their own games.
- T: That's right, yeah.
- E: What else would you do besides play baseball? Can you think, I know you said you'd go swimming up at Ironstone.
- T: I used to like to go fishing.
- E: Where would you fish?
- T: Different ponds within the radius of twenty five miles from here.
- E: Now you'd walk or take the trolley?
- T: No, we would walk.
- E: Wow, and how old were you?
- T: Uh, ten or twelve.
- E: How about the radio? Was the radio popular when you were growing up?
- T: Never had a radio.
- E: Never had radio, huh.

#### END OF SIDE OF TAPE

- T: He's in the hall of fame now. And the reason for this picture, His name is Doc Walsh. He was a doctor. And he was the medical doctor for the New York Giants. And this was taken in Spring Training. And they took this picture, because they title, it was in the New York Times, and the title, was "Three former Captains of Fordham University Baseball. Chris was was a captain, Doc Walsh was a captain, he never went to organize baseball. This was 1926.
- E: Is Frankie Bishop captain while you were at Fordham, or before or after you were there?

T: No. Yeah while I was at Fordham, my first year.

[Both are sorting through and begin discussing photographs]

T: Now this is an autograph picture of Leo that he gave me.

E: Oh, that's the autograph picture. Oh, that would be great, I could put that in a frame, and put it up for the day, and get it back to you.

T: Yeah, and this was one in the Giants uniform. I think this was taken down in Spring training, too, This is John McGraw, he was the manager of the Giants, at the time. And this, was, he was a famous child actor, Jackie Cooper.

E: Oh, really?

T: Did you ever hear of him?

E: Oh, yes, yes.

T: Well, yeah, he was a famous movie actor. This is his father, Mr. Cooper.

E: Really?

T: And this is, I think Governor Edwards of New Jersey, and this is the [unclear] farms in New York.

E: OK, and you were on what team at the time?

T: Giants. And he was the manager [pointing to a photograph]

E: I remember Jackie Cooper, wasn't he in silent pictures? Yes, because we used to see them. That was his father, That is something. [unclear]

T: That's another one, that's taken at the old timer's game.

E: Oh, that's another one at the old timer's game.

T: When we played down the middle.

E: OK, it doesn't say Giants, it looks like Merchants. So your right, it was just some shirt that he put on for the occasion.

T: This is when Jim Murphy's brother took me down to [unclear]

E: Copy of an old picture?

- T: Oh, that, [laughs] that's a picture of me.
- E: In grammar school?
- T: No, not grammar.
- E: There's no date on it. But it's certainly a school picture, let's see if we can pick you out. Do you want me to put the light on?
- T: Yeah.

# [Evelyn turns light on and they begin to identify class picture]

- T: That's Patty Mulvey, maybe, I think this might have been my brother Eddie, who would be John's father.
- E: Oh, really
- T: Yeah, I think so, I'm pretty sure that's who that is.
- E: Would that be an eighth grade graduation picture?
- T: Uh, just about, Trying to think if there is anybody else from Millville that you might know here.
- E: Maybe we could, I wonder if John has ever seen it? This doesn't look like John.
- T: John would recognize it
- E: Maybe he's seen it, I've never seen that picture.
- T: Yeah.
- E: So we'd have to know who. What school, Now where would that be taken? What does the background look like?
- T: At the Longfellow School at Millville.
- E: Now I can see quite a few trees, would that be a building right behind?
- T: Now that would be taken on the grounds of the Longfellow School. Yeah, John would recognize that. Yeah, I'm pretty sure that was Eddie. Some of these people you might heard of, this is Pat Mulvey, Eddie Kennedy, this was Doc Edward.
- E: Can I put some of these names on the back.

- T: Sure. E: OK. T: This fellow's name is Eddie Dolan. I think that might be my brother's Roggie's wife. Her name was Mary McManus. You don't remember her, do you?
- E: I remember her, but I can't pick out the resemblance, not from the way I see her in that picture. So this is a picture of the Millville Town team.
- T: The Millville Town team. This is ah,
- E: That looks like Johnny Ryan, is it, Johnny Ryan?
- T: I think it is, yes, Johnny Ryan.
- E: It is Johnny Ryan.
- T: THis is Joe McCormack.
- E: OK, I'll put those names on the back too, if you don't have them. OK.
- T: This is, I think Jean Gibbons. I think that's Jack Powers. This is another Johnny Ryan living on Main Street.
- E: Oh, there were two Ryan families?
- T: Separate families, not related.
- E: Where were you in that picture?
- T: I don't think I'm in this picture.
- E: Now when did that town team play?
- T: This would be about 19, ah, 1940, maybe, somewhere around there.
- E: So, you weren't living in Millville at the time.
- T: No.
- E: No, OK, no, I'm looking at the houses in the background, this wasn't in the meadows were you played ball.
- T: Yeah, this was in the meadows looking over, this is Main Street.

E: OK, sort of kind of get me my bearings, where would these hoses be, I don't see the Town Hall there.

T: That would be way up here, it would be out of the picture. But this is where I lived on Main Street, I think. And the railroad tracks here

E: Oh, those are the railroad tracks in back?

T: Yeah, and you go across the tracks, this looks like my house, there.

E: I thought yours was the last one?

T: On the right, going down.

E: Last one on the right, going down. OK, so

T: And coming into Millville from Blackstone, it was the first on on the left.

E: OK, so you think that was your house?

T: I think so, because,

E: But look you can see houses, would that be accross the road?

T: That would be accross the road.

E: Who lived in the other houses?

T: Uh, there'd be a Polish family, McCluskey, sounds like Irish, but it was Polish. McCluskey. And this house, Billy Farron F-A-R-R-O-N. Do you remember Billy Farron?

E: Yes, I do remember Billy.

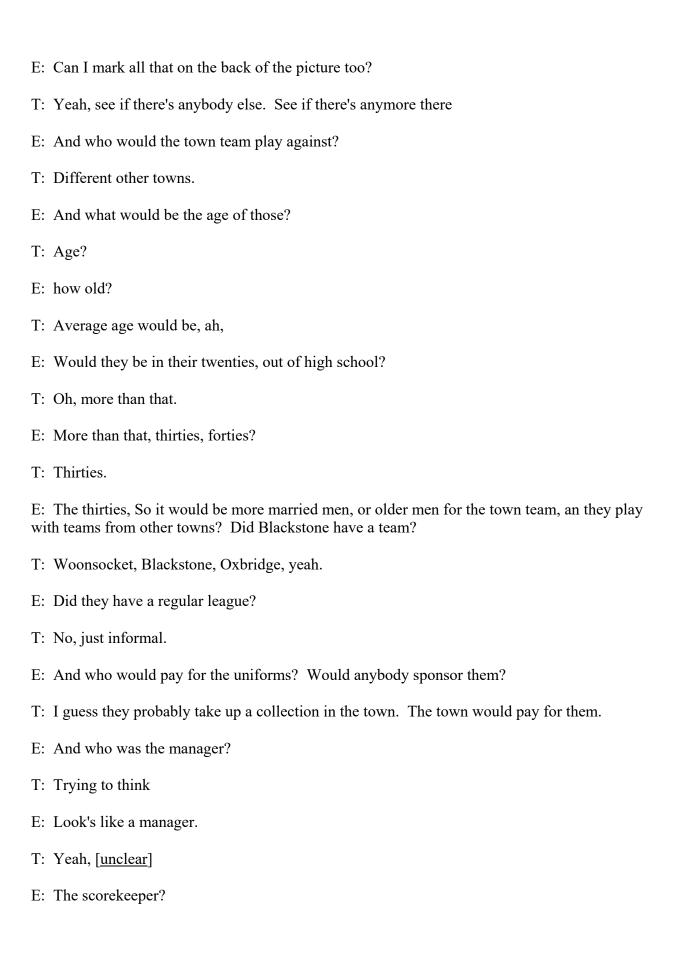
T: And as you go up here, this house I think, would be, Brit's house, accross from town Hall, almost.

E: So that would be right next to where the library is now? That's the house?

T: Now, wait a minute now, Library would be.

E: The library is opposite the town hall, all right, and there is a house right next to it. That would be the house?

T: I think so. That's Brit's house.



T: No, he look's like he might be the manager. Yeah, I can't figure out who that is.

E: Face looks familiar, almost look like a Hartnett. don't think so? this does to me certainly look like Johnny Ryan.

T: Did you know Joe McCormack? He's dead now.

E: Is he related to Booster McCormack?

T: Yeah, brother.

E: OK, So, Joe was a brother to Bill McCormack?

T: Yeah.

E: OK, so if it's OK I'll write the names on the back. OK I had asked you about these houses, they look the same so are they company houses?

T: They were originally.

E: What company?

T: The Rubber Shop built those houses?

T: I think so.

E: So your father worked for the Rubber Shop?

T: Yeah, yeah.

E: So, he didn't own the house? He was just allowed to rent it? or did he buy it?

T: He bought it uh, when he came over from Ireland, maybe five years or so after he came over from Ireland.

E: When did he come over from Ireland?

T: 1882, by the way, I'll show it to you. I have his marriage certificate.

E: Oh, really!

T: I brought it up to show it to Jerry yesterday.

E: No kidding!

- T: Its ah, I'll show it to you it 1882.
- E: Did you ever get a photostat of it? So that, you have some photostats of it?
- T: Oh, sure.
- E: You have some photostats of it?
- T: OH, no but we can make them.
- E: Oh, yes, you should in case anything happens to the original. OK.
- T: And I have another picture I brought up to show Jerry. My grandfather and my father together.
- E: You are kidding!
- T: Sitting together.
- E: Oh, I'd love to get a copy of those pictures. All right, now you used to say that your grandfather lived up Purcell Hill, so that would be
- T: No, oh yes he did live up Purcell Hill, but afterwards, he moved down to Main Street.
- E: He did.
- T: And his house, let's see, his house, I think might be this one here.
- E: OK. And his name was not MacNamara, because it was the grandfather on your mother's side
- T: William Power.
- E: So that would be the William Power house.
- T: Ok, your not sure, I'll put a question mark.
- E: OK, now what was his wife's first name?
- T: Last name?
- E: No, William and what was his wife first name?
- T: Uh, Nellie.
- E: Nellie Power. OK, all right, well that's great. So that would be that house.

T: I think so.

E: Did he work for the Rubber company also?

T: No he worked for the felt mill. They used to make the felt to go into the rubber boots, they used to wear a lot of in those days, and my grandfather worked in the felt mill, where they made the felt for the boots they made in the Rubber Shop.

E: Was the felt Mill located in Millville?

T: Yeah, it's not there anymore, but it was right next to the Rubber Shop, Course, the Rubber shop is not there anymore either.

E: No, no. Which side of the Rubber Shop was it? Suppose your on Main Street, facing toward the Rubber Shop, where was the felt mill? Nearer the center of town, to the right?

T: To the right.

E: Was it a brick building? Was it behind Lawlor's house, on Central Street?

T: Uh, behind Lawlor's, yes. If you were walking up Central Street, and if you started at the bridge,

E: Yes.

T: And your walking up Central Street,

E: Towards Main Street.

T: Lawlor's house, no, towards, up the hill, Central Street, Lawlor's house would be on your left.

E: OK

T: And uh, you'd go by Lawlor's house and then there would be a kind of a private grove, that would lead right down into the the felt mill.

E: OK, because, I saw a picture where the portable school seems to be in that location. Would you walk by the portable school to go to the boot mills?

T: I think so, yeah. the portable school, where was that? Next to the Lawlor house?

E: Well, it seemed to be in the picture. It was accross the street from Longfellow School, and seemed to be fairly close to the Lawlor house. There was a road in between there, and you could get into the felt mill. Were many people hired in the felt mill?

T: Oh, I would say two hundred.

E: And did the same people who owned the felt mill that owned the rubber company? Or they just were two separate companies, but one supplied the other?

T: No, a family by the name of Bowes, B-O-W-E-S, owned the felt mill.

E: OK, because they had property in Millville, also, one of the larger houses, so that was the Bowes family.

T: That was the Bowes family.

E: And what happened to the felt mill, because the building isn't there?

T: It was torn down, and went out of business, then they tore it down, I suppose, to save taxes, maybe.

E: Was that during the depression when they tore it down, when they tore down other buildings in Millville?

T: Depression was in the thirties.

E: In 1933?

T: No, it would be after the depression, yeah.

E: So, OK, so people worked either at the Rubber company or in the Felt mill.

T: Those were the only two places in Millville.

E: That could hire you.

T: Seemed to me, almost everybody that lived in Millville, grew up in Millville, at some time or other worked at the Rubber Shop.

E: How many people were hired by the Rubber Shop? 'Cause of the felt mill, two hundred sounds like quite a few, and the Rubber shop hired what?

T: I would say rubber shop maybe three or four hundred.

E: So about double the size of the felt mill.

T: The actual building itself, was about five times the size of the felt mill.

E: But, the number of people, was twice as many?

- T: The rubber shop was built in 1882, the year my father came over from Ireland.
- E: Oh, really. And how did he happen to come to Millville?
- T: I really don't know, I never found that out. Uh, might have been some family here that had come over from Ireland, before, and maybe they wrote to him, or he wrote to them, asking about possible jobs.
- E: All right, so your grandfather worked in the felt mill, and your father worked in the felt shop. I didn't know if he had a special trade that was useful in the Rubber Shop or whether he came and then they taught him, whatever he did there.
- T: No, my father used to take care of the cement. And he used, there was a little building, part of the rubber shop, and he used to be in that building and he would mix the cement. That's what they used to use to cement the soles of the boots together. And he was in charge of the cement.
- E: Oh, yes. And that would be in a separate building?
- T: Yeah, small.
- E: Why would it be in a separate building? Was there an odor to it? Special process?
- T: Well, no, uh, I really don't know why it would be separate, unless, uh, maybe when they built the Rubber Shop, completed it, they discovered, they didn't have all the room they needed. And instead of adding on to the Rubber Shop, they probably built this small building on the grounds of the rubber shop.
- E: Did your mother work in the Rubber Shop, also?
- T: My mother?
- E: I know she died young.
- T: No, no she died at 37.
- E: Oh, at the age of 37, so she stayed at home?
- T: yeah, because there were five children in the family, and she had to take care of the family.
- E: What's your earliest memory of growing up in Millville? What's the earliest thing you can remember about Millville?
- T: Well, I'd say from the time when I was about five years old, uh, I remember, I had an uncle, James, he was my mother's brother, he died, about the same time that I had a fifth birthday. I can remember, Strange things stay in your memory, I can remember, he brought me up to where he lived, in this house [pointing to picture at hand], on Main Street, and he lifted me up in the

casket, my grandfather lifted me up to see Uncle James in the casket.

E: And that's what you remember.

T: That's what I remember.

E: So most of the wakes were held at the homes at the time.

T: Oh yes, no funeral homes then.

E: No, now you hear about an "Irish wake", um, what would be, in other words, how would they hold the wake, they would have for three days in the home, would there be anything special?

T: Usually two days.

E: Two days.

T: Two days maybe, and two nights, and it would always be in the home. And they always have, in those days, they used to have what they call "clay pipes", you never heard of clay pipe, I bet, did you?

E: When you see pictures of clay pipe, connected with Ireland, those white clay pipes, is that the kind your talking about?

T: White clay pipes, that's what they were. In the house, where the casket was, they have on the table, they have maybe a half a dozen clay pipes, with some tobacco there, and if they wanted to smoke while they were at the wake, they could use one of the clay pipes.

E: So they wouldn't need to bring their own.

T: No, unless they wanted to.

E: So they wouldn't worry about putting the mouth on what somebody else had put their mouth on.

T: Oh, no we didn't worry about those things then.

E: No, no, do you remember anything else about the wake, or how they would have a wake, would they put a wreath on the door?

T: I don't, course I don't remember it all, my mother, cause, I was two and half when she died. And ah, the so called "Irish wake" ah, gosh, people naturally felt sorry for the family of the dead person, but at the same time, they wouldn't sit around with long faces, talking to each other. Ah, it would be kind of a get together for people that hadn't seen each other, maybe for a few years. And ah, that why kind of call it an Irish wake. It was more of a get together, than it was a funeral affair. You don't look very comfortable.

- E: No, that's all right, this is fine.
- T: Take the stuff off that chair, if you want.
- E: OK, I'll just move it over a tiny bit. Now, you said they hadn't seen each other in quite a while, would they come from a long distance?
- T: Who?
- E: The people that would come to the wake would come from a long distance?
- E: That arm is loose.
- E: So I see, I'll pull it this way
- T: No, They wouldn't come a long distance, unless, some of the immediate relatives, might. But it would mostly be people, like if it was a funeral in Millville, people that lived in Millville, knew the family, they would come to the wake.
- E: Course I suppose it was hard to travel in those days, too.
- T: It was.
- E: Now you said you were two and half when your mother died. When were you born, what was the year you were born?
- T: November 1898.
- E: So, how would people travel about town? What was the first
- T: Horse and wagon. And, ah,
- E: Would everybody have a horse and wagon?
- T: Not everybody, no, People used to go out walking.
- E: Was there a trolley in Millville then?
- T: Yes, there was a trolley that went from Millville to Woonsocket. And then there was another one that ran from Worcester to Providence. Electric cars.
- E: So how many lines of trolley tracks would there be? Two lines of trolley track running through the center of town?
- T: No, there'd be one line, and it would be what you call a switch. They take an extra track for a

period of maybe a 100 yards, and one of them would switch off if there was one coming the other way. Like if, somebody was going to from Millville, to Woonsocket, they'd go on this track and then, if there was another coming from Woonsocket to Millville, this one here would have to sort of switch off. And there was an extra track for about a hundred yards, just to let the other one go by. So they could pass each other.

E: Now in New York City, I remember the trolleys would have something over head, like a wire going up, and there would be wires over head. Did these trolleys have an overhead wire?

T: Yeah, that would be were they got the power from?

E: And what would it cost to ride the trolley? Suppose you went from Millville to Woonsocket?

T: Five cents.

E: No kidding, And if you went from Millville to Providence?

T: Oh, that would have been maybe twenty, twenty-five cents.

E: And probably be the same if you went from Millville to Worcester?

T: Yeah.

E: How long would it take you to shall we say, get to Woonsocket from Millville?

T: Uh, there wouldn't be too many stops. Because it was all country, once you got out of Millville, until you got into Blackstone, and there would be a stop though, maybe two stops in Blackstone. They'd continue onto Woonsocket, so altogether it would take half an hour.

E: And to get say, from Millville to Providence?

T: It would take, about, well it would be, close to an hour. Course the car that would go from Millville, we were in the same car, you'd have to take your car from Millville to Woonsocket, then another car, to Woonsocket to Providence.

E: Now what did the cars look like? Were they open? or where they closed?

T: In the summer time, yes.

E: In the summer, they would be open?

T: In the summer, they'd be open cars.

E: then what would they do? take the same car and put something like a door to close it in the winter?

- T: In the winter, yes.
- E: Would they be heated, or unheated?
- T: I don't think they were heated. I don't remember. Because it was, Millville to Woonsocket was a fairly short ride. And they wouldn't bother with heat.
- E: And if you wanted to take it, would they stop anywhere along the main street, or would you have to be at a certain place.
- T: Have to be at a certain place.
- E: And how often would they run?
- T: From Millville to Woonsocket, uh, maybe four times a day.
- E: So you'd have to know when they were coming, there would be a regular schedule that you would have to look at. What did the cars look like? What were the seats like? Can you remember anything about, exactly, how they looked?
- T: The cars?
- E: Umm
- T: Well, uh, it was like the ordinary inside, ah, the seats of course would be, leather seats, and ah, they have a motor man, and a conductor.
- E: Oh, two men, would you have a coin box that you would put money in?
- T: No, the conductor would go around and collect from the passengers, individually.
- E: Give you a paper ticket of some type.
- T: They had what they call a transfer. If you were going from Millville, and you wanted to Providence, you get, you'd pay one fare in Woonsocket, and then the conductor, if you asked him, the conductor would give you a transfer, which would pay part of your fare from part of, from Woonsocket to Providence.
- E: Now, if you wanted to go a little bit faster, would the train also, run?
- T: Take the train, from, well, the train you'd have to go to the depot in Millville, you know where the library is now?
- E: Yeah.
- T: And you could go right from there to Providence.

- E: So they would have, how often would the trains run?
- T: Uh, to go to Providence, three or four times a day.
- E: Would they be much more expensive than the trolley?
- T: Yes, it'd be more expensive, uh, from Millville to Providence by train, might be fifty cents. 'Course they would stop and talk, and then go on to Providence.
- E: Now what was the name of the Railroad company that went through, do you remember what line was it?
- T: Uh, I don't remember the name.
- E: How about the name of the trolley company? Was that a special name?
- T: Yeah, it was a special name, I can't think of that now, either.
- E: Was it privately owned or was it owned?
- T: Privately owned, oh yeah, a corporation.
- E: Now Boland, who ran the bus lines, did he have anything to do with the trolley?
- T: Not at that time, no, there weren't any buses.
- E: Did he ever buy into the trolley line and go from there to the buses, or did he just start when he had the buses?
- T: No, he just had the buses. But they, Boland's buses didn't come in until uh, 1930, maybe.
- E: When did they, did they ever rip up all those tracks for the trolleys or did they just pave over them?
- T: In many cases, they paved over them, in some cases they ripped them up.
- E: But, the tracks must have been set up in dirt, or was that a paved road at the time.
- T: Oh, no it was set in dirt.
- E: Set in dirt.
- T: And of course the train, the had regular railroad tracks, and the tracks were supported by, what they call a railroad ties. Slices of wood under the rail.

E: So, that would be fine, if you went from place to place, if you went say, from Millville to Blackstone, but if say, you wanted to go up Chestnut Hill, if you didn't have a horse and buggy, you'd just walked. So you would walk up, if you wanted to go up.

T: Well, exactly, Wini used to walk to church every morning.

E: I know.

T: So, uh, you were so used to walking in those days, that wouldn't be much of a walk.

E: No, what would be some of the places to would walk to? Would you ever walk to Blackstone? Or walk to Oxbridge and think nothing of it?

T: Might walk to uh, what we call Ironstone, which uh, would be a walk of about, uh, three or four miles, and there was a reservoir up there, we used to go swimming, up in, part of South Oxbridge now. And that's one of the places we'd walk to. That's about all.

E: So you wouldn't really travel to far. Growing up you wouldn't travel too far from your home town.

T: If we got to Providence once a year, it would be quite a treat.

E: It would be unusual, yeah.

T: Even Woonsocket, uh, speaking of charge, we used to be able go to WOonsocket, to see a movie, for fifteen cents. Five cents, probably to go down, five cents to get into the movie, five cents to get back, fifteen cents.

E: But that was a treat, though.

T: Oh yes, you didn't do that too often. It wasn't too often that you were able to get fifteen cents to spare.

E: To go to see a movie. And where would the movie, what movie house would it be? Would it be the stadium in Woonsocket?

T: No, that wasn't built then, it would be, there was an old rooming house, called the Nickle Theater, and they called it the Nickle Theater, because they charged you a nickle to get in. That was one of them. There was another movie theater, called Smith's Theater, and there was another one called the Bijou, on Main Street, and later on, they used to have what they called, stock companies, and a group would come and stay in Woonsocket for maybe a month, and put on a play, in the Bijou, actual plays, live people. And they have maybe half a dozen different stories that they played. And they do that, we used to call them stock companies. Stock theater.

E: What would they charge for admission?

- T: Well, let's see, they might charge something like a dollar.
- E: Which was probably a great deal then.
- T: It was a lot of money in those days.
- E: So, you would never go to see that as a child, it was more when you were older and working?
- T: Yeah.
- E: What's the first thing you remember about school, when you went to school in Millville? Or what do you remember about those early years?
- T: I remember the teachers. Everybody, I think remembers the teachers. We used to classify between ourselves, some would be very nice, some would be too strict. And uh, we have, usually have a different teacher in every grade.
- E: Do you remember the names of some of your teacher?
- T: Oh, yes. My first teacher would be Miss Mary Martin. And after that I would have somebody called Jesse Reed, and then comes Miss McGinley.
- E: McGinley, G-I-N-L-E-Y?
- T: And then Miss Ryan, Kate Ryan, and then grammar school, Miss Ryder.
- E: Now, what do mean about the grammar school? When you mention the first four teachers, where did you go to school those first four years? At Longfellow?
- T: Longfellow.
- E: Now, they wouldn't call that the grammar school? Now when you said you went to the grammar school.
- T: Well, the grammar school, would be the eighth grade.
- E: I see.
- T: That would be Miss Riley, then you'd go to high school.
- E: OK, so all of the grades you went to were in the Longfellow Building? You didn't go to the portable school at all?
- T: No, it wasn't there.
- E: OK, now, you'd have a teacher for on year?

- T: Yes.
- E: So your first grade teacher was
- T: Miss Martin.
- E: Second grade?
- T: Jesse Reed
- E: Third grade?
- T: What is the grade your talking about now?
- E: Did they have, like the grades are today? First grade, second, third,

T: My first grade, they didn't have kindergarten, I remember my first grade, that would be Miss Martin, and I only stayed in the first grade probably, two months, and strangely enough, I had a brother Bill, and at that time he was going to high school, and uh, from the time I was about maybe, three years old, he decided that, he'd see how much he could teach me at home, before I got to school, and had a friend of his, George Martin, and the two of them, used to come in, at least twice a week, after they were out of high school, and they started to show me how to read, and how to do simple arithmetic, how to write, so that by the time I got to go to school, first grade, I could read and write. Which was of course unusual. That's why they only kept me about two months at the first grade and they moved me up to the second grade. And in fact, I don't think it did me any good, because, uh, from then on, I was always with boys and girls who were older than I,

- E: And larger, in some ways.
- T: And larger, yeah. So, uh, I probably would have been better off, if they didn't do that.
- E: Um, I think that's right. 'Cause I had somebody in my family who was what they called 'skipped' into another grade and there were problems.
- T: By the time I got to high school, four years of high school, I was only fifteen when I graduated from high school, which was too young. Plus, when I got out of high school, like everybody else, I had to go to work. Never had any thoughts of going to college. 'Cause the family didn't have enough money to even think about it. But, uh, I worked about four years, then I had a chance, to go to Fordham, on an athletic scholarship.

E: so you worked, after you graduated from high school, you did work four years, and then went to college.

T: 'Cause those four years, I never had any idea of going to college.

E: Where did you work during those four years? Where?

T: Oh, partly in the rubber shop, and then, my brother Rog, you remember him, he was a toolmaker, and he was working in Bridgeport, CT. So, uh, my father was alive then, this was, by 1916, he died in 1914, but before he died, Rog was a toolmaker, and my father asked him if he saw possibly, would you get me a job as an apprentice, toolmaker, down in Bridgeport. So, Rog looked around, and uh, he was able to get me started, and I went down to live with him in Bridgeport. And I was an apprentice toolmaker, for about three years, then I had a chance to go college, on an athletic scholarship.

E: Where did they see you playing baseball, to give you an athletic scholarship, if you were working in Bridgeport?

T: I was, I played with two teams in Bridgeport during the summer.

E: What were the names of those teams? Do you remember?

T: The first one was the Centers, C-E-N-T-E-R-S. They called them Centers because they came from the center of the city. And the next year was St. Joe's, St. Joseph's.

E: When you worked at the Rubber Company, what do you remember about the rubber company when you worked there in Millville? What kind of work did you do?

T: I was, I worked in the sole room. They had several machines there that cut out the soles of boots. And each man that ran the machine, would have a boy, who would take the cuts, off the machines, and put them on side and pack them up. Keep them out of the way, so that he could continue running the machine. And I was the boy for one of those machines.

E: So in another words, that would be your way of apprenticing, you would learn, as you would

T: Not so much in the rubber shop, I wasn't an apprentice.

E: No?

T: 'Course it would have happened that way if I stayed there. yeah. Because you wouldn't possibly graduate so that you could run the machine.

E: How young were some of, when you say the boys. how young, now you said, you graduated from high school at fifteen, so you went into the rubber shop at about fifteen, sixteen, but how young would some of the children be that worked in the rubber shop? Were they much younger than that?

T: I'd say maybe like fifteen to twenty.

E: Would any go into the rubber shop after finishing the eighth grade, in other words, not go to high school, but go right into the rubber shop?

T: Yes, yes, not too many, 'cause there was no charge of course, in high school, that was free.